

# THE HOME OF INNOVATION



# INNOVATING TODAY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Global urbanization and population growth increasingly contribute to climate change and deplete the world's natural resources. It is therefore vital that cities play a leading role in realizing a more sustainable future for all, by redefining how we live together.

To ensure cities can tackle the challenges of climate change and sustainable development, we need a place where sustainability, innovation and community moves hand in hand. A place to reimagine tomorrow through the R&D of cutting-edge innovations and technology, to deliver the sustainability solutions of the future.

Over the past decade, Masdar City, has been doing just that. As one of the world's most sustainable urban developments and the only planned and approved R&D cluster in Abu Dhabi, Masdar City is pioneering research and development in sustainability. The City is home to more than 1,000 companies, many of which are dedicated to developing innovative technologies across the sectors of renewables, energy storage, artificial intelligence, health, space, and mobility.

Masdar City provides a dynamic ecosystem of education, R&D, innovation and technology, and a unique strategic base through which companies can test new technologies and build their partnerships locally and globally, all while spearheading the innovations to realize greener, more sustainable urban living.

Welcome to Masdar City, a pioneering sustainable urban community and innovation hub in Abu Dhabi, UAE.





# A 'GREENPRINT' FOR TOMORROW'S SUSTAINABLE CITIES

## Design & Green Building

Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, is a world-class hub for technology, innovation, and research and development, facilitating the advancement of real-world solutions in clean energy, water efficiency, agri-tech, health, mobility, and artificial intelligence.. The City combines ancient Arabic architectural techniques with modern technology to create one of the world's largest clusters of high-performance buildings. The cluster operates as a real-time laboratory that monitors, studies and improves upon ways cities use, conserve and share resources.

Each building in Masdar City is constructed with low-carbon cement, utilizes aluminum that is 90 percent drawn from recycled sources, and is designed to reduce energy and water consumption by at least 40 percent than that of the average building in Abu Dhabi. These specifications are set in accordance with LEED and Estidama Pearl Building Rating System baselines. Estidama – named after the Arabic word for sustainability – is administered by the Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT).

Masdar City's contemporary architecture and narrow shaded walkways naturally bring people closer together and create a unique ambience, while a series of integrated, pedestrian-friendly districts and open public spaces help to promote a healthier way of living.

## Mobility

Getting into and around Masdar City is simple, due to a variety of low-carbon public transportation options, including the Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), the autonomous NAVYA shuttle, electric shuttle cars, it's electric public buses. The City's future transportation options will include a Metro line, Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Group Rapid Transit (GRT).

The next phase of the City's evolution will see the development of homes, schools, mosques and parks, along with additional cafés, restaurants, as well as service and retail outlets. Various urban components are master-planned to connect with pedestrian pathways as well as its rapidly developing public transport system.



Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) at Masdar City



Eco-Bus

# AN EXCEPTIONAL LOCATION

- Masdar City is located at the crossroads of the Middle East and Asian markets and connects seamlessly to a strong logistics and transport network.
- Located within a major growth area of Abu Dhabi, Masdar City is a prime destination for international business - it is located 5 minutes' drive from Abu Dhabi International Airport, 20 minutes from downtown Abu Dhabi and just 40 minutes from Dubai.
- Masdar City offers direct access to all areas of Abu Dhabi, the UAE and beyond. This accessibility will be further improved with the introduction of future public transport and metro networks.





# HOME TO LEADING BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

Being part of Masdar City's Free Zone offers tenants access to a unique business community that inspires innovation and future thinking through regular networking events, introductions, and referrals to other free zone companies. The City is home to start-ups, SMEs and multinationals from a wide range of industries with a dynamic mix of private and government companies. The City's innovation ecosystem connects knowledge with research and business with investment opportunities.

At the heart of this ecosystem is the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), which began its programmes in January 2021. MBZUAI is a research-driven graduate university and the first in the world dedicated to the study of artificial intelligence.

Some of our anchor tenants include:



UAE Space Agency



Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI)

# A GROWING BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The City is a growing ecosystem where specialized knowledge and enterprise interact to fuel creativity. Connecting education with research and development and business with investment opportunities, Masdar City is a powerful business enabler and a strategic base from which businesses can build their network locally and globally, explore multiple investment opportunities, and test new technologies.

The City's growing residential, commercial, institutional, leisure and hospitality spaces, and cafés and restaurants are designed to offer a well-rounded urban experience in a unique environment where people can live, work, learn and play.



My City Centre Masdar

Some of our retailers include:



Home Bakery

Marl's Organic





# TAILORED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTORS & BUSINESSES

Whether you are a developer, an investor or a business looking for office space, Masdar City offers a broad range of opportunities geared to the unique needs of every entity:

### Land

Developers can choose between buying or leasing land (Musataha) to develop their own projects that enhance the City's theme of mixed-use community living, with sustainability at its core. The investment options include, but are not limited to, apartments, villas, townhouses, office buildings, schools, universities, retail outlets, light industrial facilities, research and development facilities, and hotels.

### Build to Suit

Large organizations can partner with Masdar City to engineer bespoke commercial, retail, residential, recreational, educational, healthcare, and corporate spaces. The dedicated team at Masdar City can design and deliver a complete project within specific business, technical, and financial parameters.

### Office Space

For businesses, including start-ups and small and medium enterprises, Masdar City has office spaces that cater to the unique specifications of each entity. We offer shell and core or offices that are fully furnished and equipped, saving businesses time and money and allowing them to prioritize their core business activities.

### Retail Space

Retailers have the opportunity to lease space for food and beverage and service outlets throughout Masdar City.



Siemens Middle East HQ at Masdar City



Incubator Building, home to Masdar City Free Zone's One-Stop Shop at Masdar City

# MASDAR CITY FREE ZONE

As an economic free zone, Masdar City offers a hassle-free environment in which companies can operate. The City is home to multinationals, SMEs and startups from a wide range of industries with a dynamic mix of private and government companies. The competitive pricing, comprehensive support system, and synergy that springs from the City's unique innovation ecosystem, combine to offer an immense value-add to all partners.

**Masdar City's Free Zone status gives tenants a range of advantages, including:**

- Application and processing of UAE Golden Visa
- 100% foreign ownership
- 100% exemption from corporate and personal income taxes
- 0% import tariffs
- Quick and easy set-up at the Free Zone's One-Stop Shop for registration, government relations and visa processing
- Freedom to repatriate capital and profits
- A launch point into local, regional and international markets
- Critical mass of knowledge and talent
- Cost effective licensing and office space
- Close proximity to Abu Dhabi International Airport and only a 40-minute drive to Dubai
- Dual licensing
- Reduced tax footprint
- A pro-business environment
- Professional access to R&D partnerships

**Tenants benefit from a wide variety of support services provided by Masdar City Free Zone's One-Stop Shop team, including:**

- Registration, licensing, and leasing
- Visa services, including medical checks
- Dependents sponsorship
- Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce membership
- Emirates ID card processing
- Document authentication
- PO box set-up
- Facilities and property management
- Meeting room and conference facilities

**Step by step guide to setting up your company:**



**Licensing tariffs**

| Business Registration / License Fees |                                      |                   |                                |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                      | Business Package                     | Start-up Package* | Women Entrepreneurship Package | Space Zone Package |
| Number of Activities                 | Upto 6*                              | Upto 5*           | Upto 5*                        | One*               |
| Visa Eligibility                     | Minimum 2 or more depending on lease | Two               | One                            | Depending on lease |
| Registration Fees (One Time)*        | 3,000/-                              | 3,000/-           | 3,000/-                        | 3,000/-            |
| License Fee Starting From            | 14,000/-                             | 10,000/-          | 6,000/-                        | 6,000/-            |
| Lease Starting From                  | 10,000/-                             | 6,000/-           | 6,000/-                        | 10,000/-           |

- Activities will be limited and subject to approval.
- Package charges in AED currency.
- AED 1,000/- will be added for Special Names, subject to DED.
- Additional fee for general activity is AED 2,500/activity and for special activity is AED 5,000/activity.
- Virtual desk AED 6,000, Flexi desk AED 10,000 (Excluding 5% VAT)

| Office Rental Rates |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Type of Lease       | Fee (AED) / Annum |
| Virtual Desk*5      | 6,000             |
| Flexidesk*5         | 10,000            |

| Visa Fees  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Description  | Fee (AED) |
| Immigration Establishment Card   | 1,500     |
| eChannels Registration (One Time Charge) *3  | 2,500     |
| Employment Visa Deposit*4 (Refundable)   | 2,500     |
| Employment Visa Package - 3 Year Visa (Excludes Visa Medical Fitness Test & Emirates ID) | 3,350     |
| In-country – Issue Entry Permit while applicant is in the UAE – (if applicable)          | 800       |
| Local Amendment – Residency stamping while applicant is in the UAE- (if applicable)      | 800       |
| Medical  | 350       |
| Emirates ID Charges (for 3 Years)  | 450       |

- \*1 Except segments; 1.11, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 16, 22 & 24
- \*2 Start-ups package client convert to signature package upon completion of 3 years.
- \*3 Annual renewal fee for eChannel is AED 1,500/-
- \*4 Employment Visa Deposit of AED 2,500 applicable per employee. Which will be released after visa cancellation.
- \*5 A refundable security deposit equal to 2 months rent is required for Flexi Desk Leases
- The above mentioned rates are inclusive of 5% VAT, except for lease



# ABU DHABI, THE GATEWAY TO EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Abu Dhabi is an exciting, vibrant, multicultural city and a truly international capital. Located at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates, a country with a heritage of tolerance and openness, and a well-deserved reputation for welcoming citizens from more than 200 countries.

The emirate has also established a growing reputation as a source of global thought-leadership and innovation due to a series of forward-thinking projects and initiatives across a range of diverse sectors including energy, infrastructure, sport, culture and tourism.

Abu Dhabi is already recognized as a global pioneer in renewable energy. This is in part due to the vision and achievements of Masdar, that is committed to advancing the development, commercialization and deployment of renewable energy and clean technologies.

Today, Abu Dhabi is one of the world's most exciting and rewarding business environments: the emirate's journey towards economic diversification is creating a range of unique opportunities for individuals and businesses who want to contribute to its continuing growth and progress.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What are the legal frameworks for entities to be established in Masdar City Free Zone?

Masdar City Free Zone offers the following three legal frameworks:

- Limited Liability Company – Corporate Shareholder
- Limited Liability Company – Natural Shareholder
- A Branch of a Foreign / UAE company – Branch

## What is the minimum capital required for establishing a company in Masdar City Free Zone?

There is no minimum capital requirement if you are setting up a branch of your company. However, for establishing an LLC, the minimum capital requirement is AED50,000 (US\$13,623.97).

## Do I have to employ UAE nationals in my business?

It is not mandatory to do so, you are free to hire staff from any country.

## Can a Masdar City company enter into partnership with another body / entity to set up another company outside Masdar City?

As a legal entity, a Masdar City company can enter into partnership as a shareholder in another entity, whether inside or outside Masdar as permitted.

## Do I need a local partner to invest in Masdar City Free Zone?

No, 100 per cent foreign ownership is permitted in Masdar City Free Zone.

## Can I establish a branch of my own company?

Yes, any company can establish a branch in Masdar City Free Zone.

## Is it possible to open a branch office of my free zone company outside the Masdar City Free Zone?

Companies incorporated and registered in Masdar City Free Zone have their own legal identity and have the right to open branches outside the free zone subject to the approval of the concerned authorities.

## Can I be a partner in more than one company?

There is no restriction on the number of businesses one person can be a partner in.

## Can I transfer my money outside the country freely?

Yes. Masdar City Free Zone allows unrestricted repatriation of capital and profits.

## Is there any corporate / income tax applied to the companies or to the individuals?

Masdar City Free Zone follows a zero percent tax regime.

## Can I sell my goods in the local market?

The licence issued by Masdar City Free Zone is valid for operating your business only inside the free zone. Goods can be sold in the local market through distributors or agents.

## Can I have a licence from Masdar City Free Zone but operate from Dubai or another UAE Emirate?

The licence issued by Masdar City Free Zone is valid for operating your business only inside the free zone. This licence cannot be used for setting up a business in any of the other Emirates. Goods may be sold to other Emirates through distributors.

## Can a company take a licence at Masdar City Free Zone without renting a facility?

No, a company must lease a facility in order to receive a licence.

## How long does it take to register a company after submitting all legal documents and settling payment?

Registering a company will take two working days after submitting all legal documents and settling payment.

## How long does it take to set up a business through Masdar City Free Zone?

It takes an average of five days to set up a business once a completed licence application has been received.

## What is the method of payment for facilities at Masdar City Free Zone?

Advance payment is required.

## What are the activities allowed in Masdar City Free Zone?

All trading activities of specific products are allowed as long as they are not hazardous.

## What is the validity of the licence?

Licences are valid for a period of one year and are renewable on an annual basis.

## Is it necessary for businesses licensed by Masdar City Free Zone Authority to lease premises in your zone?

Commercial licences issued by Masdar City Free Zone Authority are subject to leasing a facility within Masdar City.

# PLANNING, DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION AWARDS

## | 2022

- Most Innovative Company in «Urban Development and Real Estate» for «Making Sustainability a Way of Life» at the Fast Company Middle East Awards.
- Sustainable Project of the Year (Masdar City Central Park), Construction Innovation Award, MENA Green Building Council
- Small Project of the Year (Masdar Central Park), MEED Projects Awards 2022 (submitted by KEO IC)
- Sustainable Project of the Year (Masdar Central Park), MEP Middle East Awards (submitted by Mustadam Limited JV)
- CEO listed under "Most influential Arabs 2022" by Arabian Business
- CEO listed under "Top 100 CEOs in the Middle East" by Forbes
- CEO listed under Utilities ME Top 50
- The MEPRA Awards - Best Integrated Campaign (For A Sustainable Future) Silver

## | 2021

- Eco Residences 2 for Rethinking The Future Awards 2021

## | 2020

- Eco Residences 2 project awarded the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Green Building Project of the Year, MENA Green Building Awards 2020

## | 2019

- United Nations Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements – Global Forum on Human Settlement for Planning and Design Award
- Planning and Design-Sustainable Cities And Human Settlements Awards (SCHSA) 2019
- Mobility Management - Dubai Award for Sustainable Transport (DAST)
- Masdar City for Best Sustainable Developer at Building the Future-The Top Real Estate Companies, Forbes Middle East 2019

## | 2018

- Masdar City-UAE Pioneers Award
- Masdar City Free Zone – Fdi Global Free Zone of the Year Awards 2018:
  - Best Free Zone for R&D
  - Best Free Zone for Renewable Energy
  - Second place in the category of Best Free Zone – Middle East region
- The Cityscape Awards for Emerging Markets Residential – Low to Medium Rise – Future category for the Masdar Institute Neighbourhood
- Masdar Park-The Green Flag Award
- Etihad Eco residence - MENA Green Building Awards 2018, submitted by Multiplex Constructions LLC
- Etihad Eco Residences - The Sustainable Project of the Year 2018 - MEED Awards, submitted by Multiplex Constructions LLC

## | 2017

- The Neighbourhood 1 Residences (N1R) project - 'Sustainable Project of the year 2017' - Big Project Middle East Award 2017, submitted by Multiplex Constructions LLC
- The Global Free Zone of the Year Awards (Masdar City Free Zone):
  - Best Free Zone for Start Up Support award
  - Best Free Zone for Renewable Energy
  - R&D Incentives and Facilities Upgrades

## | 2016

- National Winner (IRENA HQ) - MEED Quality Award for Projects
- Urban Design (Concept) Masdar City Phase 2 Detailed Master Plan Rethinking The Future Award 2016:
  - Best Free Zone for R&D Partnerships
  - Two bespoke awards for Start Up Support and Company Expansions
  - Second place in the category of Best Middle East Free Zone for Large Companies.
- Best Office Architecture (IRENA HQ) - Arabian Property Awards

## | 2015

- EGBC Green Commercial Building of the Year (IRENA HQ) - Emirates Green Building Council

## | 2014

- Sustainable Construction Project of the Year (IRENA HQ) - BGreen
- Green Project of the Year (IRENA HQ) - Big Project ME Awards

## | 2013

- Gold for Energy Efficiency for Public Sector (Masdar Institute) - Emirates Energy
- Outstanding International Architecture Project (Masdar Institute) - British Expertise International Awards
- 2013 – MEED Quality Award for Projects (Siemens Building):
  - GCC Sustainable Project of the Year
  - UAE Sustainable Project of the Year
- First Prize for Sustainability Award (Siemens Building) - Cityscape
- International Institute for Advanced Purchasing and Supply (IIAPS):
  - Outstanding Performance in Sustainable Supply Chains
  - Outstanding Performance in Ethical or Sustainable Supply Chains

## | 2012

- MIPIM Architectural Review Future Projects Award (Siemens Building) - The Architectural Review
- Best Office Architecture (Siemens Building) - International Property Awards
- Middle East Architects Award, Sustainable Project of the Year and Commercial Project of the Year (Siemens Building) - ITP Business

## | 2011

- International Award (Masdar Institute) - RIBA

## | 2009

- Sustainability (Masdar City) - Condé Nast Traveller Innovation & Design Award
- Best Sustainable Development (Masdar City) - Cityscape Real Estate Awards

## | 2007

- Sustainable City of the Year (Masdar City) - Euromoney and Ernst & Young Global Renewable Energy Awards
- Best Environmental Real Estate Project (Masdar City) - Cityscape Real Estate Awards.







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